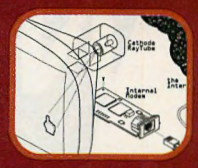


each frame; we used index for the list of links, news for the news page, tools for the collection of extras, and body for the tools and news area.

Step 2. Prepare the link list. This is the easiest page to code—just compile the addresses of your favorite places on the Web into a list of links. You'll want to include a TARGET attribute in the HREF tags to send the links to the main frame; for our example, we set TARGET to body. Save this file as links.html.

Step 3. Prepare the tools. You'll need to set up an email address, choose a search engine, and grab the relevant source code to paste into your own page. Then lay out the elements of the tools in a table that will go at the top of your main area. Keep it short and wide so you don't lose too much vertical space in your browser. Save this file as tools.html.

Step 4. Put it together. To stitch this together into a useful Web page, you'll need two frame sets (a frame set is a small HTML page that allows you to include two or more other HTML pages). One frame set will combine your tools file from step 3 with your news service, so you should create two rows for this. Label the top frame tools and give it a size just large enough to display everything in your tools.html file—ours wound up 150 pixels tall. Call the other frame news and point it to your news service. Save this file as body.html. Then create one more frame set with two columns. Call the left column index and have it load your links.html file; it should be 150 to 200 pixels wide. Call the other one main and have it load your body.html file. Save this frame set as index.html and load it into your browser. One final refinement you might find useful is to add a link in your link list to get back to your tools and news page. Point it to the body.html file, with TARGET set to your main frame.–RICH PIZOR

avoid stalkers

and avoid becoming a stalker

No matter which end of it you're on, stalking is never a healthy thing. Luckily, keep a few basic rules in mind and you can easily avoid playing the role of either stalkee or stalker—even in the information age.

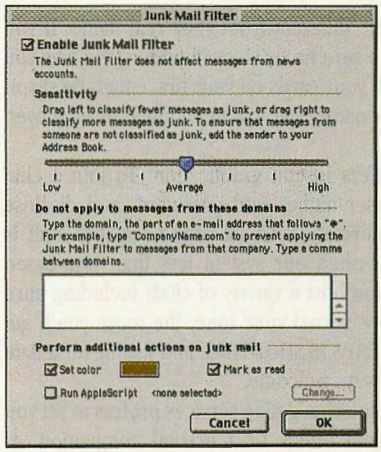
To avoid stalkers, adopt the New York City streetwise mentality—don't talk to, look at, or acknowledge anyone online. Of course, you don't have to act that extreme. You *can* talk to people—just don't reveal any personal information, such as your address, phone number, or even last name, unless you're positive you want to. Also, don't use your real name online, because that makes you a target for a quick call to 411. It also helps if you don't use a provocative screen name like Pussycat or Hotgrrl. We're not old-fashioned—we understand the concept of love in the digital age. Just don't reveal too much info, exchange pictures, or agree to meet in person too early in the relationship. If you can't even trust your neighbor, you certainly shouldn't trust some random person you met online.

On the other side—well, it's up to you to realize when you're starting to seem creepy. If you find yourself Instant Messaging someone every time he or she is online—with no response—or if you've sent five unanswered email messages (no, the server didn't eat them *all*), it's time to cut yourself off before you officially reach stalker status.–CATHY LU

control spam

Junk email, also known as spam, is here to stay. You probably can't avoid it completely with any effort short of running over your modem with a steamroller, but you can take steps to loosen its grip on your online life. Here are ways to keep spam out of your email in-box.

- Keep a low profile. Every time you post a message to Usenet or a message board, enter an online contest, or otherwise put your email address out there, spammers can harvest. It doesn't make sense to keep your email address totally hidden, but think twice before you share it. You may even want to set up a free Web-based email account (for example, Hotmail or Yahoo mail) just for Net use and as a spam repository.

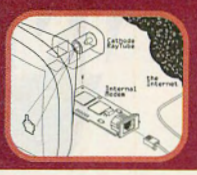

Junk Mail Filter
Enable Junk Mail Filter
The Junk Mail Filter does not affect messages from news accounts.
Sensitivity
Drag left to classify fewer messages as junk, or drag right to classify more messages as junk. To ensure that messages from someone are not classified as junk, add the sender to your Address Book.
Low
Average
High
Do not apply to messages from these domains
Type the domain, the part of an e-mail address that follows "@". For example, type "CompanyName.com" to prevent applying the Junk Mail Filter to messages from that company. Type a comma between domains.
Perform additional actions on junk mail
Set color
Mark as read
Run AppleScript
<none selected>
Change...
Cancel
OK

SPAM—WE HATE THE FOOD, and we hate it even more when it shows up in our in-box. Luckily, the junk-mail filter in Outlook Express can help you spot spam—but Outlook won't sweep it under the rug for you.

- If you're an AOL member, simply having a member profile is all it takes for spammers to find you. Go to keyword Member Profile to remove your profile and make your address harder to find.
- Don't add yourself to opt-in advertising lists. Don't even add yourself to opt-out lists, which provide convenient lists of email addresses for unscrupulous spammers.
- Use mail filters to deal with spam before you see it. For instance, you can create filters that look for messages with subject lines containing ADV:, $$$, and MAKE MONEY, then toss them in the Trash. Outlook Express 5 includes a junk-mail filter that can make spotting spam easier, but the program won't delete it automatically unless you add an AppleScript yourself.

Despite your efforts, some junk email will land in your box. Now what?

- The speediest retaliation is to press the delete key and forget about it. Whatever you do, don't buy the crap that spammers hawk—not only will you encourage them, but the transaction will likely disappoint you.
- Don't press the reply button to give the spammer a piece of your mind. At best, your email will bounce back, unread. At worst, the spammer will have assurance that your email address is valid and will send more junk your way.
- If you want to make spammers lose their Internet access, send a message to their access provider. Visit http://www.abuse.net, an informative site that provides tools for effectively complaining to the powers that be.–KEVIN SAVETZ

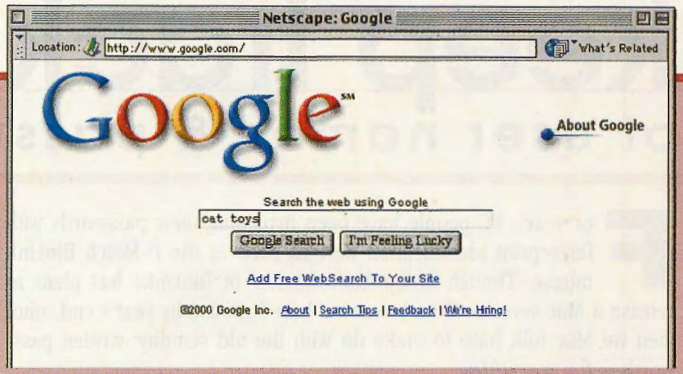


do a good web search

With all the junk circulating on the Net these days, it's almost impossible to avoid bad links, outdated information, and the omnipresent porno factor. But with a few simple revisions to your hunting habits, you can narrow the line between quick, easy search results and deargodwhatsallthiscrap.com. Which search engine is right for you? It all depends on what you're looking for.

First of all, it's important to remember that the big boys and girls (Yahoo, Altavista, Excite, Lycos, LookSmart, and so on) have their place. These days they tend to differ mainly in design and layout, making your choice more a matter of personal preference than a performance issue. However, all of them offer extremely effective ways of organizing and categorizing results. Many provide additional services lesser-known sites don't offer, such as email and news topics. And they are definitely the easiest tool for browser novices.

One way to avoid dead links (like the many you find on popular search engines) is to skip straight to sites you know recently worked for someone else. Directhit (http://www.directhit.com) uses a time measurement method when compiling its research results. The longer you stay at a page you reached from Directhit or another site that uses this technology, such as Hotbot (http://www.hotbot.com), the higher that page moves in the results lineup for the next searcher. Another engine, Google (http://www.google.com), tracks how many other pages link to the pages it lists, then uses that number as a sorting criterion. The more outside sites



IT AIN'T PRETTY, but it works—the more sites that feed into a URL, the higher up that URL appears in the search results.

feed into a particular page, the higher up it moves in your Google list of potential places to visit.

Know exactly what you're looking for? Askjeeves.com lets you type in specific questions, such as "How do I contact my congresswoman?". It can help you avoid slogging through all kinds of trash—everything from politicians touting or trashing five-year-old voting measures, to zealots going on about why you should still worry about Y2K.

If you really want your work done for you, though, try searching for a category-specific links site. For example, Ultimate Band List (http://www.ubl.com) offers the latest band news, and at Petlinks (http://www.petlinks.com) you'll find out everything you ever wanted to know about your furry, four-legged friends and other pets. Find out if a site exists for your area of interest by typing a term and the word links in any search engine.—JOEL ENOS

find free webspace

Looking for a cheap place to put pictures of your cat or that ode to Beck? Plenty of sites provide free Web hosting—just throw together some HTML and pictures of your Hello Kitty collection, and you've got yourself a Web page. Most free hosts allow you to create Web pages using your favorite HTML editor or (for true nerds) by hand-coding. Some even offer ultrasimple online Web page creation tools that let you create a page without special software or HTML knowledge. Just make sure you shop around for the features you need before deciding on a Web host. Be forewarned: A free server will subject your visitors to banner or pop-up advertisements. If you can't stomach that, you'll have to pay for a commercial Web host.

Some of the places you can find free hosting include:

iDisk (http://itools.mac.com/itoolsmain.html) Mac OS 9 users can store up to 20MB on their iDisk, including their very small Web pages, or use one of Apple's pregenerated templates.

Tripod (http://www.tripod.lycos.com) Tripod offers Web weavers 11MB of free space, including advanced features like a CGI and JavaScript library.

Xoom.com (http://www.xoom.com/webspace) offers unlimited space for your pages, an archive of free clip art, and other fun features.

50megs.com (http://www.50megs.com) serves up a whopping 50MB of space. The optional Pro version allows you to serve ad-free pages for $5.95 per month.

Lists of other free Web hosts are available at http://www.123freepage.com.

—KEVIN SAVETZ

FEELING CHEAP? Visit Tripod. Advanced features include Perl scripts and custom domain names.

internet

keep track of user names & passwords

CUTE AS A MOUSE, the Biolink takes your thumbprint and only gives access to certain users. Expect a Mac version by the end of the year.

For years, PC people have been bypassing their passwords with fingerprint identification devices such as the U-Match BioLink mouse. Though CompuLink (maker of BioLink) has plans to release a Mac version of its biometric-based mouse by year's end, until then we Mac folk have to make do with the old standby: written passwords—*for everything.*

With the keychain feature, OS 9 does offer some relief from occupying a bunch of our personal memory blocks with endless passwords for online banking, Amazon—whatever. Now you can use one password to get to the myriad others stored in your keychain's memory. But you still have to make up those other passwords—and even if you don't have to remember them anymore, you still want to make sure no one else figures them out. So here are a couple of pieces of advice people don't follow as religiously as they should when it comes to picking passwords.

- We all know not to use our middle or last names, or our children's names, right? Well, it's a good idea not to use any names at all. If you do, mix them up a bit. Someone might figure out "Sebastian," but "Sebastian761" is obviously more obscure.
- Replace letters with numbers. For example, in a word like *mantra,* substitute *3* for *a* (m3ntr3).
- Don't use the first word that comes to mind. You'll never believe how many of us use "Valentines" or "coffee break" just because of what time of year or day we happened to log on.
- Don't rely on the same code for everything—use variations. If you always have some form of "Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious" as your password, no one else will figure it out, but you'll know it's either "califrag" or "expial" when you're wracking your brain to get in.
- Change your passwords periodically. There are times when you have to let your mom use your AOL account—and while you *trust* her, you never know when she might go sneaking into your email again.–JOEL ENOS

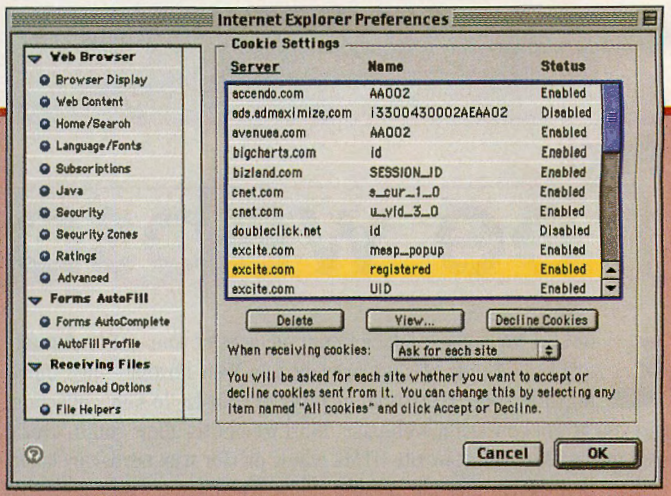
deal with cookies

In the most surreptitious of ways, Web sites keep notes about you, thanks to cookies—not the fattening kind. A cookie is simply a note that a Web site leaves on your computer's hard drive—they're roughly analogous to the Preferences files that your applications leave in the System Folder.

Cookies store information you give a site so that next time you visit, the site remembers your preferences. For instance, if you tell a site that you prefer to see the frames version and that you use an iMac, the site can stash that data. The next time around, it will use frames and tell you about new iMac software.

Cookies can only store information you provide. A site can't get your email address, for example, unless you enter it somewhere. Some people don't like cookies because advertisers can use them to send targeted ads. After you visit several Web pages about Pokémon, you could start to see more banner ads for, say, Pokémon underwear.

To control how Netscape Communicator handles cookies, choose Preferences from the Edit menu, then click Advanced. You can accept all cookies (the default), accept only cookies that get sent back to the site you're visiting (a sensible alternative if you're worried about advertising sites tracking you), or not accept cookies at all (for militant cookie-hating surfers). You can also tell the browser to warn you every time a site places a cookie on your computer, though this can get annoying quickly. To see your cookies, find the file named MagicCookie in your system and view it with a text editor.



INTERNET EXPLORER lets users fine-tune their control of cookies, blocking out sites that use cookies for targeted advertising.

In Internet Explorer, choose Preferences from the Edit menu and click Cookies under the Receiving Files tab. The options range from Never Allow to Never Ask. You can enable cookies on a site-by-site basis, as well as view and delete individual cookies. Find more info about cookies at http://www.cookiecentral.com.–KEVIN SAVETZ